

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Status of Claims:

Claims 1 and 7-20 are currently being canceled.

Claims 2-4 are currently being amended.

No claims are currently being added.

This amendment cancels and amends claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 2-6 are now pending in this application.

Claims 4-6:

Applicants appreciate the indication in the Office Action that claims 4-6 contain allowable subject matter. By way of this amendment and reply, claim 4 has been amended to place that claim in independent form to include the features of its base claim and any intervening claims, as well as to address the objection to that claim (without affecting the scope of that claim) on page 2 of the Office Action. Therefore, claim 4, as well as claims 2, 3, 5 and 6 which depend either directly or indirectly from claim 4, are now in allowable form.

Claim Objections:

In the Office Action, claims 3, 4 and 13 were objected to because of minor informalities noted on page 2 of the Office Action. By way of this amendment and reply, claims 3 and 4 have been amended to correct those informalities, and claim 13 has been canceled to thereby moot the objection to that claim.

Claim Rejections:

In the Office Action, claims 1 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,340,810 to Yokoyama et al.; claims 3, 8-13 and 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yokoyama et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,508,024 to Cannon; claims 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yokoyama et al. in view of Cannon and further in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0042251 to Kitano; and claims 2 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yokoyama et al. in view of Cannon and further in view of Japanese laid-open patent application JP 2001-312165 to Miyahara et al. Due to the cancellation of claims 1 and 7-20, and due to the changed dependencies for claims 2 and 3, these rejections are now moot.

Conclusion:

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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